

## Golf Committee Chairman's Update

I wanted to write about the exciting news that the Board approved plans for the new Indoor Golf Centre and Short Game Practice Area ('IGC/SGPA') were very well received when we presented them at the Club's AGM on 22nd May.

As you will all agree I'm sure, we are blessed with a wonderful course that is almost always in fantastic shape. When it comes to practice facilities however, we lack in some significant ways, particularly compared to our local competition and especially in relation to facilities for other sports at Roehampton Club. Following Member feedback in 2019 we identified a specific need to address both an upgrade to our short game facilities as well as the desire for a means to effectively practice the 'long game' component of golf. Given our Club's obvious restriction to provide a suitable outdoor solution we embarked on project to use simulated golf as the best alternative to meet this second need.

In addition, there was an emphasis placed on improving the overall 'Member's journey' relating to golf, with an aspiration to concentrate all golf facilities in a central location, not far from either the Clubhouse or the first tee. As I showed you in my last contribution, it became clear that the best location for the IGC/SGPA would be the current driving range location, which I depict again here.



We envisage Members walking past the Sports Shop to pick up their trolleys in the shed on their way to the IGC/SGPA where they can enjoy a pre-round warm up in the short game area as well as in one of two dedicated first floor bays reserved for upcoming tee times. From there, the golfer would walk on a newly constructed path, past the reservoir and current outdoor hitting bays (which will be retained) to the first tee. The tee will however require 20m high protective netting (depicted as the slanted pink line). This is warranted given it will result in the necessary protection for Members to comfortably use the SGPA, which will now be located in a previously largely unused part of Club grounds.

We also plan to dig a new creek down the right side of the first fairway, which will serve to both discourage wayward shots into the SGPA area as well as to provide a suitable replacement for the current drainage ditch which will be filled and covered by the new putting green.

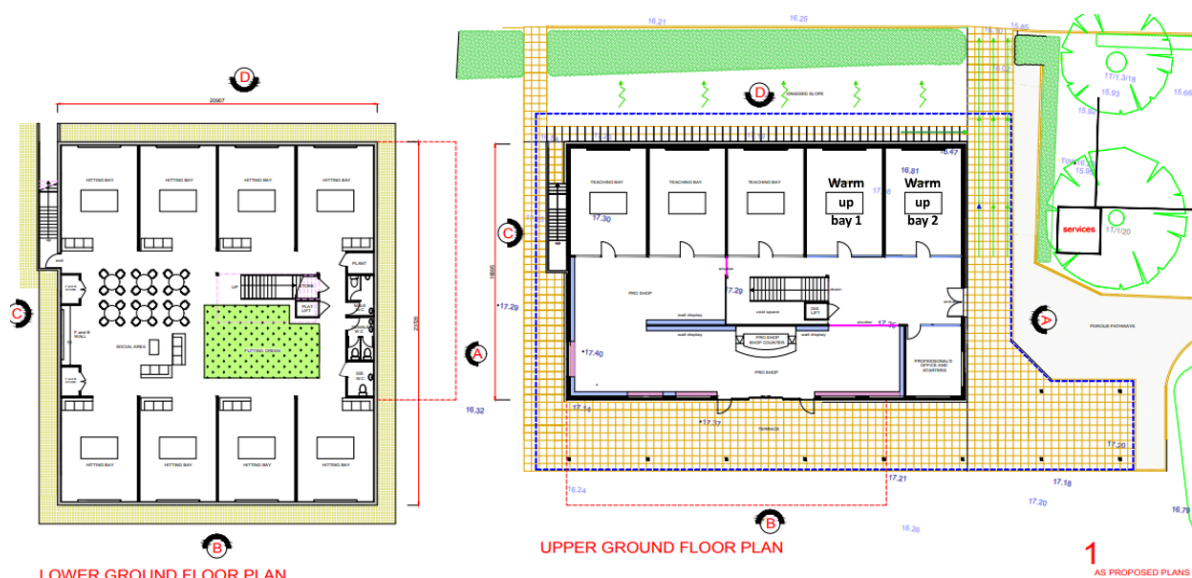
The SGPA itself will consist of a sizeable green with two bunkers as well as multiple 'pods' (green dots) from which to practice a variety of short game challenges. In addition, there will be an outdoor

hitting area located close to the IGC itself, where Members will be able to hit 25m-40m shots to the SGPA green. I should mention that the current short game area by the 18<sup>th</sup> hole will remain in place as is, as we want this to be used primarily for supervised clinics, particularly for Junior Members.

Beyond the SGPA green we will also construct a second large putting green located directly in front of the IGC itself, which we expect will look approximately like the building depicted below.



As previously disclosed, the building itself would comprise of two floors, with the upper ground floor dedicated to the pro-shop and teaching bays as well as the two warm up bays located immediately to the right by the IGC entrance. Downstairs we would look to develop the main Members' area with two rows of four bays with a large social space, beverage and self-serve vending area and indoor putting green dividing them. To provide the best training facilities, each bay would be fitted with the latest Trackman simulator technology whilst being wide enough at 5m to comfortably host a four ball for social or competitive golf.



Simulated golf is growing steadily globally and we believe facilities of this kind will enable Roehampton Club to get ahead of a similar trend in the UK whilst offering the opportunity for golf to be played and taught all year round. The association with Trackman will also ensure we will continue to provide state of the art technology and teaching facilities that will attract and retain the best local talent whilst also encouraging friends and family to play golf and socialise in a fun setting.

Furthermore, we will offer all amenities (including an improved retail offering) in a safe centralised location in a previously underused part of Club grounds. And whilst the use of the IGC/SGPA will initially be bookable for golf Members only, we expect to be able to introduce the game to new golfers at the Club once we have a better sense of overall utilisation rates.

The overall benefits are clear and although the project is ambitious, we believe the investment will deliver a strategic asset that will bring our golf practice facilities in line with our Club's vision as the premier multi-sports club in London. A truly exciting time for golf at the Club and I thank you all for your continued support as we move further along in this venture.

### **Next steps**

Following the recent full Board approval, we are now scheduled to meet with Wandsworth Council for a pre-planning meeting on 27 June, where we hope to meet with limited resistance and after which we expect to proceed towards full planning permission. Only after this full planning approval can we start approaching various companies who will tender bids for construction. With a bit of luck we hope to commence construction around the new year and to open the new IGC/SGPA towards the end of 2024. As always, I will be sure to keep you updated on all developments as we proceed.

I encourage you to keep up to date by reading these Recorder contributions as well as the minutes of the Golf Committee which are available on the Club website under 'The Club – Committees and Minutes' and of course feel free to email me with any thoughts or concerns you may have.

Niels Verbeek, Chairman, Golf Committee – [nielsverbeek2004@yahoo.com](mailto:nielsverbeek2004@yahoo.com)